

have delayed this for well over a year now. It is unconscionable.

Japan has been in the economic doldrums for about half a decade. If the yen gets above 150 or so, the situation will get extremely worse. China could devalue. We could face a conflagration around the world.

The House Republican leadership must stop fiddling around.

IRS REFORM PROVIDING PEACE OF MIND TO AMERICANS

(Ms. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Congress sent bipartisan IRS reform legislation to President Clinton's desk for his signature. The bill will protect honest, productive Americans by leveling the playing field between taxpayers and the IRS.

Everybody has a horror story about the IRS and about one of their audits, so we took action. By shifting the burden of proof from the taxpayer to the IRS, taxpayers now will be innocent until proven guilty under the new law, just as any American is innocent in a U.S. court of law.

For the first time, Congress extended confidentiality protections to taxpayers that covers the advice they receive from their tax preparers. This change should provide some taxpayer peace of mind by protecting them from IRS fishing expeditions at taxpayer expense.

The IRS reform bill is an important example of how Republicans in Congress are working very thoughtfully and very steadily to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on this Congress to pass legislation to strengthen our neighborhood public schools. As a former superintendent of schools in my State, I know firsthand what it takes to improve education for all of our children. We must raise academic standards for our students and ensure accountability to our parents, the taxpayers and our communities. We must build new schools to reduce overcrowding and to provide a safe and orderly disciplined environment, free from drugs, violence and gangs. We must reduce class size and equip our children with the basic skills they need to make the best of their God-given ability.

But instead of helping our public schools, where over 90 percent of all of our children attend, this Republican-led Congress, has chosen risky voucher schemes that would divert public resources to subsidize private schools.

Using taxpayer money to provide private schools tuition is wrong. Our neighborhood public schools need all the resources we can provide them. I commend the President for his veto yesterday of the private school voucher scheme.

I have a better bill for our public schools. My bill would provide money out of that voucher bill to provide building new schools. I urge this Congress to take action.

HUMANITARIAN DE-MINING IN WESTERN SAHARA MUST START NOW

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of 165,000 refugees living in the middle of the harsh Western Sahara Desert. Just last week I returned from a visit to these refugees. I was deeply impressed with the strength and determination these people showed in their ability to survive in the midst of such a harsh environment.

The Sahrawi people are in refugee camps because of a 20-year territorial dispute with Morocco over the land known as Western Sahara. The conflict ended with an agreement that the United Nations peacekeeping force, called MINURSO, will conduct a free, fair and transparent referendum.

Unfortunately, as I saw last week, according to the July 10 report from Kofi Annan to the UN Security Council, Morocco continues to obstruct this process by denying the Swedish de-mining contingent the use of their equipment to carry out their task to remove the hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions of land mines, that have been placed in Western Sahara.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Kingdom of Morocco to review its position as requested by the UN so the process agreed to by both parties can continue and the lives of innocent civilians be spared by permitting the team to de-mine the area.

SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this could be your story, the story of the over-the-counter prescription that the Republicans are offering the American people with health care.

You could have the story of the witness yesterday in our managed care hearings whose baby died in her stomach in the eighth month because her HMO refused to give her the kind of care needed for high-risk pregnancy. Maybe you would be the young student who fell off the bar doing acrobatics and gymnastics, and Dr. Wei, a witness who came to our attention, found her

in great pain with little pulse. When they called for an ambulance, the HMO said, "Oh, she doesn't need an ambulance. We know she is nine-years old, we know she is crying in pain, we know she has no pulse, but she doesn't need an ambulance." Or maybe you might be the person who needed breast cancer surgery and fought with your HMO down to the very wire, when it was too late almost, until your Congressperson had to call and get that kind of surgery.

The Republican so-called bill dealing with health care leaves my constituents and leaves all Americans with no water in their cup. I am not going to support an empty cup. Support the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights. Stand for what is right.

PROTECT AMERICAN LIBERTIES

(Mr. BARR of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when you connect the dots of several recent Clinton administration actions, a frightening picture clearly emerges.

Over the past few months, the administration has issued several executive orders and proposed agency rules which will fundamentally change the relationship between the government and the States and their citizens.

The Department of Transportation is moving us rapidly toward a national identification license. Executive Order 13083 abrogates the powers of the States and the people thereof and overrides the 10th amendment.

The administration is working to develop a "health identifier" system to track every citizen's medical history from cradle to grave. The FBI seeks the power to track cell phone owners and users without a court order, while it also seeks to levy a gun tax and compile a registry of lawful gun owners in America.

Mr. Speaker, take notice of the picture being drawn. Let us take the necessary steps now to protect our liberties, before they are lost completely.

WOMEN'S CAUCUS LEGISLATION MUST-PASS LEGISLATION MOVING FORWARD

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, this session the Congressional Women's Caucus has crafted a must-pass list of bills which we call the Magnificent Seven. For the first time, the Women's Caucus, and we are now 55 women strong in this Congress, has chosen not a wish-list, but a real list for passage.

Last week the second of the Magnificent Seven passed, the Lowey amendment affording contraceptive choices for Federal employees. The week before, sections of the Violence against Women Act, another priority, passed.